

92

Boston, Nov. 26, 1864.

My dear Johnson:

In communicating to you the conclusion to which I have come, after much anxious thought, respecting the union of the *Liberator* with the *Standard*, I regret to think it will cause you great disappointment; yet, as you have been animated by a brotherly regard to my health, welfare and usefulness, and a wish to have nothing done which did not commend itself to my considerate judgment, you will do me the justice to believe that I very gratefully appreciate the efforts you have made to bring about the projected mingling of the two papers. Indeed, your unfailing friendship for more than thirty years — always hearty, but never more so than now — calls for my warmest recognition at all times. That friendship I have tried as heartily to reciprocate; and never have we differed, whether in regard to public affairs or private matters.

I have always esteemed you a sagacious counsellor, and given much weight to your deliberate opinion. Had it not been so, I should hardly have been persuaded to look at any proposition for uniting the Liberator with the Standard; but you were so earnest about it, so obviously satisfied that the change would be greatly to my relief and advantage, as well as beneficial to the cause of freedom and reform generally, and so desirous of having a committee of conference appointed, that I was not unwilling to have the necessary investigation made as to the expediency of the measure. It was certainly desirable, for various reasons, to ascertain how many persons took both papers; and a careful examination of both subscription lists, by Mr. May and Mr. Whipple, shows the number of such to be considerably fewer than I had supposed — less than four hundred. The actual number of paying subscribers to both papers is under four thousand.

I met the Executive Committee on Friday, to whom the sub-committee made their report. Mr. May, on the whole, was inclined to favor the union; Mr. Whipple was decidedly opposed to it, unless upon the contingency of the stopping of the Liberator. Mr. Quincy was not present; but from the conversation I had with him a few days before, I ascertained that his views were coincident with my own. The other members present were Mr. Bowditch, Mr. Sargent, and Anne M. Weston. After a full survey of the whole question, I believe the conclusion was pretty unanimous against making the experiment, (even with my consent,) until the next annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Your several letters to Mr. May, Mr. Quincy, and myself were duly considered; and they certainly presented the subject in the strongest possible light — though I am confident your calculations were much too sanguine in regard to the financial question.

I will state, very briefly, how the matter lies in my own mind.

1. Had the recent Presidential election resulted in favor of McClellan, it could have been regarded as a condemnation of the emancipation policy of Mr. Lincoln; and in all probability we should have had four years of pro-slavery villany and ruffianism to encounter. This would have required a corresponding lease of life of our Society and its organ, and justified — so far as time was concerned — the union about which we have been conferring. But Mr. Lincoln's re-election is certainly the death-warrant of the whole slave system, and indicates that we are very near the day of jubilee. I have no doubt that, among the earliest acts of the approaching session of Congress, the adoption of the contemplated anti-slavery amendment of the Constitution will be successful; in which case the amendment may be so promptly submit-

ted for popular ratification that it may be consummated by the return of our anniversary in May. Should that happen, we shall meet only to disband, and to discontinue the publication of the Standard. With this cheering prospect before us, it is altogether undesirable to attempt to amalgamate the two papers for so short a period; for although it is generously proposed, in that event, to give me the goodwill of the joint subscription lists, yet I am persuaded it will be most fitting to let the Standard continue to the end, as it has hitherto been, distinctively the organ of the Society, without change of name.

2. On the whole, I prefer to let the Liberator remain equally distinctive to the end, whether it stop at the close of the present volume, or continue its publication. Should it stop, I shall not object to be a corresponding editor of the Standard, if still desired. But my hope is, that its existence may be prolonged.

3. Each paper has its own features and peculiarities; and the continuance of each, for the present, if possible, I think is desirable. The Standard will, of course, be sustained — at least, till next May. What may be the pecuniary condition of the Society at that time remains to be seen. The treasury is now empty, and between now and the Subscription Anniversary probably not a dollar will be put into it; so that a loan must be effected to meet the current expenses till that time. I do not believe — taking my salary into account — that the union of the two papers would bring any pecuniary relief, but rather increase the burden. It is easy enough to calculate that the great mass of the Liberator subscribers would take the Standard, if I wrote for it; but there is no certainty about it, while the burden of my salary would be inevitable. My conviction is, that many of them would discontinue their subscriptions.

4. I am not insensible to the compliment intended to be conveyed in the assurance, that it is what I write that alone interests the readers of the Liberator; but I am not willing to believe, after an editorial experience of thirty-eight years, that, aside from my own lucubrations, I have neither the tact nor the talent to make an interesting journal. This touches me too closely. If the Liberator has been ^{at all} effective in the past, it has ^{been} owing to its completeness, as a whole, from week to week, and not to what I have written. This is the true value of every journal. My selections have cost me much labor, and they have been made with all possible discrimination as to their interest, ability, and appositeness. The amount of communicated original matter has always been much larger than that of the Standard; and though not always of special interest or value, it has made the Liberator less a transcript, and more readable on that account.

5. The Liberator has an historic position and a moral prestige which would be lost should it be merged in the Standard. True, the loss would be the same should the paper be discontinued; but I shall try to prevent this by increasing the subscription price for the next volume. I confess to a strong desire to keep it along till the amendment of the Constitution is secured, and slavery abolished. It will then have accomplished its Anti-Slavery mission.

6. It is uncertain as to the results of our Subscription Festival, and the unity of the Society in the future. We had, therefore, better defer all action respecting the papers till the May meeting.

It gave me surprise and regret that the project was submitted to the Pennsylvania A. S. Society, in public meeting, though it was all well-intended. It ought not to have been done without my consent, and is the more to be regretted as the union is not to take place. I do not attach much weight to the vote,

nearly unanimous as it was — first, because but few copies of the Liberator are taken in Pennsylvania; and, secondly, because I suppose it was generally believed that the proposed change ~~would~~ meet my own wishes.

I think you exaggerate the effect upon my health of the mechanical labor I perform in the office; although, of course, it sometimes ~~I~~ causes considerable weariness and prostration. From this I shall aim, in great measure, to exempt myself by being more methodical with the copy, and giving directions to Mr. Yerrinton how to make up the forms. My bodily ailments are bleeding piles and chronic catarrh, and these are equally debilitating, and depressing to the spirits. If I could be cured of these, I should be rejuvenated.

Though you may still feel that the plan you have urged, as to the union of the two papers, is wisest and best, I know you will readily acquiesce

in the decision to which I have come; especially as that decision seems to accord with the judgment of the Executive Committee at the present time.

Accept, dear Johnson, a renewal of my grateful acknowledgments for your many kindnesses, and the lively interest you have ever evinced in my welfare and happiness. I have not a more attached or a more disinterested friend in the world than yourself. And the Anti-Slavery cause has never found a truer advocate or a more faithful laborer than you have been from the hour you espoused it.

Ever faithfully yours,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

P. S. I have concluded, on the whole, to raise the price of the Liberator, for the next volume, to \$3.50, rather than stop it. It was the unanimous opinion of the Executive Committee the other day, that hereafter the Standard should be put at \$3.00.